



CHANGING ROLES OF TEACHERS

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ABSTRACT

The greatest change in schools today is not the integration of technology, not the way classrooms are being built, not even the changes in curriculum and assessment, but that the role of the teacher in the classroom is being transformed in ways that we are not fully aware of or ready for. There's an old saying, "children are not a vessel to be filled, but a fire to be lit." Teachers face the challenge of helping to guide students through individualized learning pathways, identifying relevant learning resources, creating collaborative learning opportunities, and providing insight and support both during formal class time and outside of the boundaries of the school. From being the traditional gate-keeper of knowledge to the modern facilitator of knowledge the teacher's role has undergone tremendous change. The teacher today is not confined to the classroom but is the catalyst of change in this ever changing world. To prepare the students for the world of today and tomorrow, the role of the teacher has to meet the needs of current culture. Since the teacher is the single most important factor in student success, it would make sense to focus on this role in today's world and understand how the teacher's role must be redefined to meet the needs and demands of today's world. This paper examines the changing roles and responsibilities of a modern day teacher.

KEYWORDS: teacher, changing roles and responsibilities.

Introduction

Traditionally, teaching was a combination of information-dispensing, custodial child care and sorting out academically inclined students from others. The underlying model for schools was an education factory in which adults, paid hourly or daily wages, kept like-aged youngsters sitting still for standardized lessons and tests.

Teachers were told what, when, and how to teach. They were required to educate every student in exactly the same way and were not held responsible when many failed to learn. They were expected to teach using the same methods as past generations, and any deviation from traditional practices was discouraged by supervisors or prohibited by myriad education laws and regulations. Thus, many teachers simply stood in front of the class and delivered the same lessons year after year, growing gray and weary of not being allowed to change what they were doing.

Many teachers today, however, are encouraged to adapt and adopt new practices that acknowledge both the art and science of learning. They understand that the essence of education is a close relationship between a knowledgeable, caring adult and a secure, motivated child. They grasp that their most important role is to get to know each student as an individual in order to comprehend his or her unique needs, learning style, social and cultural background, interests, and abilities. Milton Ramario (2010) says, "Effective teaching has to be fluid and adaptive to current culture." The effective teacher understands what skill and knowledge are to be learnt by the pupils. Following are some of the changing roles and responsibilities of teachers in the present world:

To Integrate The Art And Science of Teaching: The science of teaching requires content knowledge, organization of knowledge, management skills, detailed planning whereas the art of teaching requires the basic skills of making interaction with students, parents as well as connecting the curriculum to the world of the present day in a relevant manner. The teacher of 21st century is required to maintain cordial, friendly and favorable relationships with students, parents and colleagues for the sake of the success of tomorrow. Success of students is the ultimate goal of education. An effective teacher has to embrace the culture of present generation and adapt to needs of the students today. Thereby the art and science of teaching are to be integrated to make the learning environment relevant. Then only the teacher can thrive and the students can flourish.

Developing cordial relations and putting positive influences: Teachers often have a strong foundation in content area, but current teacher preparation programs need to emphasize on operational and interpersonal skills that are crucial to the classroom of today. The operational skills include multi managing, planning, and organization of the classroom and learning environment.

This also includes developing relevant applicable lessons that relate to the lives of the students, so that they find the information meaningful and will ultimately take responsibility for their own learning. The interpersonal skills include developing authentic relationships with students, parents, and faculty, as well as creating a respectful environment where all stakeholders take responsibility in the learning process.

The teacher of today is to make a difference in the students' life. Effective ways for the teachers to make a difference are:

- Defining ways to help the growing number of students who live in high risk situations by becoming persons putting positive influences in their lives. (Deiro, 1994)
- Hawkins et.al(1992) said that the most powerful and effective way teachers can help students overcome the negative influences in their environment is by developing close and caring connections with them.
- Today's students are different. Their social and emotional needs are not being met and they do not have enough adults in their lives who know, who they are and genuinely care about them which is a pre-requisite for healthy teacher connection.

Understanding Parents: The changing role of the teacher today requires a different perspective with the parents; it is no longer teaching and working in isolation but cultivating a relationship with the parents. The effective teacher today understands that the 21st Century family has greatly changed in dynamics and is under immense pressure due to the demands of today's culture. Many adults today have one of the toughest and most demanding jobs simply being a parent. The job of parenting is not made any easier by the generational gap that exists between parents and their technological savvy children. It is important for the teacher to learn to relate with the parents of the 21st Century. As teachers it is important to respect the role and work of the parents, and also to encourage parents to have their child learn from his mistakes.

Development of Professional Success: Sharma (2003) stressed on professional success as an important aspect in today's teachers. It means that up to date professional knowledge, fullest devotion and dedication along with teachers' efficiency and effectiveness is the clarion call of today. Teaching profession today faces a crisis of confidence as compared to other professions like medicine, law, engineering etc, because there is no mystique, no body of knowledge, skills and professional values necessary to effective teaching. Teaching must continually refresh their learning and keep themselves abreast with modern techniques.

Development of Teacher Effectiveness: Teaching Profession in the present era must bear the responsibilities for the competence of its members, which can be achieved through training. Therefore the following definitions are to be realized: Teacher Competency: any single knowledge, skill, or professional value which a teacher may or may not be possessing; but the possession of that particular knowledge or skill is believed to be relevant for the successful practice of teaching. For E.g.: the ability to communicate effectively is not competency but the possession of some set of skills necessary for effective communication is a competency. Competency is assessable.

Teacher competence: how competent a teacher is, is reported by a number of competencies in him.

Teacher Effectiveness: refers to teacher's performance in terms of his pupils' outcomes. It depends on the context in which teachers perform and the responses

pupils make. Therefore, effectiveness is measured in terms of the behavior of the pupils.

Enabling a Diverse Group of Students: As the demands on teachers are increasing, they are needed to provide useful information to students. The effective teacher understands that there are core skills and knowledge that have to be learned, and must be presented in a manner that students find relevant. With the classrooms becoming more and more inclusive today, effective teaching refers to enabling a diverse group of students to learn more complex materials. They are expected to take together a heterogeneous group of learners and prepare them for higher order thinking and performance skills.

Preparation on the four pillars of learning: The changing role of the teacher includes reaching beyond the walls of the school, a new kind of preparation that enables the teachers to go beyond "covering the curriculum". With the growing knowledge base built on the four pillars that constitute the foundations of Education : (International Commission on Education for 21st Century) Learning to be, Learning to know, Learning to do, Learning to live together, today's teacher must imbibe in their students the four pillars of education as mentioned in the Delor's report, "Learning the Treasure Within" (1996). According to the first pillar 'Learning to Know' the teachers must create within the students an urge for learning to learn. 'Learning to Do' emphasizes acquisition not only of an occupational skill but also of the competence to deal with many situations and work in teams. "Learning to Live Together" the third pillar requires development of an understanding of other people and an appreciation of interdependence in a spirit of respect for the value of pluralism, mutual understanding and peace the last pillar "Learning to be", will support the development of one's personality and ability to act with greater autonomy judgment and personal responsibility. Thus, these four pillars of education can be considered as the founding pillars in the preparation for young learners as responsible world citizens of tomorrow.

Development of morality and values by educating the heart and the head: The responsibility of the teachers in a changing world scenario is the emphasis on ensuring benefits of development to reach all groups in the society. Development of morality and values through education of the heart and the head, particularly at a time, when individuals and nations are resorting to violence to settle their conflicts is crucial. The role of the teacher in this changed scenario would be to help individuals to take responsible decisions.

Meeting Issues and Challenges of Future: The changing roles and responsibilities of the teacher also demand how to help societies to meet the issues and challenges of future, which comprise decentralization of decision making, autonomy, pedagogical reform from teacher centered education to learner autonomy and independence, openness to international cultures, development of global education, stressing citizenship, environmental concerns, peace, human rights and international understanding. Teachers in the 21st century confront the challenges opened up by globalization. Teachers should introduce students to their world, and moreover inculcate in them a sense of their own power to create change in the world. Teachers should not just transmit knowledge to students; they should instill in them a sense of their place in the larger world, and urge them to be active participants in it.

The new professional profile of the teachers should include the changing characteristics for raising their social status:

- Promoting values and attitudes leading to the development of community,
- Displaying expertise in teaching,
- Assisting learners in acquisition of knowledge and skills using varieties of teaching methods,
- Guiding learners for self actualization,
- Achieving versatility in knowledge,
- Becoming technologically literate and integrating technology in the teaching learning process;
- Openness to embrace new teaching strategies
- Participating for the upliftment of teaching profession,
- Reinforcing human rights and peace education,
- Developing caring responsibility,
- Being a friend, philosopher and guide to students,
- Generating self-help and feeling of universal brotherhood.

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